Charles D. Baker, Governor
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massDOT
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

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The Honorable Edward Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey,

I appreciated the opportunity to engage in dialogue with you at the October 14 Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs' Subcommittee on Economic Policy field hearing at the JFK Federal Building in Boston.

Before I address the two questions you posed, I want to reiterate my commitment to you and Senator Warren, and to our riders, that the MBTA system is safe -- but we can and will do better. I am committed to continuing to make the T a safer, and more reliable transportation system.

The recent FTA inspection was an opportunity for the MBTA to learn and receive a thorough assessment of what we are doing well, and more importantly, where we may have a deficit and need to improve our processes. I believe the final report accomplishes that.

As riders continue to return to the system, I understand the frustration many of them feel. On behalf of the more than 6,400 hardworking men and women of the MBTA, we acknowledge that safety incidents have occurred and that our service levels aren't where we want them, in part due to staffing challenges, that have forced us to make hard decisions that represent prioritizing safety above all else. These challenges are impacting major transit agencies across the country.

At the hearing, I agreed to release data on average train times. The T is currently in the development stage of designing a Travel Time dashboard that will be located on the MBTA website. We hope to have this tool available this winter and I will notify your office prior to the dashboard going live.

I also agreed to release a list of the current work that still needs to be done to get the Orange Line up to full speed. The MBTA has made significant progress in lifting speed restrictions, with most other restrictions scheduled to be lifted in November and December. It's important to note, the MBTA's Maintenance of Way crews perform continuous inspections of our assets, and in the case of track sections, from time-to-time there will be speed restrictions to allow for identified defects to be repaired. This is standard procedure to safely maintain the system. Also, maintenance and construction does not end at the conclusion of a system closure or construction surge. Maintaining the tracks, signals, power, vehicles, stations, and tunnels is an ongoing and continuous investment, there will always be construction and maintenance at the MBTA.

The Orange Line surge was managed by the T's Capital Transformation Department and completed a series of essential construction projects, including replacement of 14,000 feet of rail, more than 2,800 rail ties, and laid 48,000 feet of new signal, including 45,000 feet of signal cable within the Southwest Corrido. The T's Maintenance of Way department is a function of the Operations Division and is responsible for the day-to-day

maintenance of the system's track, power, and signals, among other responsibilities. At the completion of the 30-day closure, Maintenance of Way continued the momentum of the surge and began addressing other areas of priority along the Orange Line, utilizing many of the resources available from the previous work. This additional work included transitioning between new and existing construction and replacement of additional rail and tamping. As a result of this additional maintenance, speed restrictions have remained in place longer than originally anticipated.

The information below is a status of Orange Line speed restrictions, followed by a list of future and upcoming work that will bring the line closer to a state of good repair.

Orange Line Northbound:

- **Jackson Crossover:** Prior to the Orange Line closure, speed was restricted to 10 mph. Ties embedded in concrete were replaced and as a result the speed was increased to 25 mph. Remaining track work with the embedded ties will extend through the next 60 days before the speed restriction can be lifted to the 40 mph line speed.
- **Tufts Curves:** The track was restricted to 10 mph for rail wear prior to the surge. During the surge, the worn rail was replaced. In addition, rail fasteners, or Cologne Eggs, were replaced to improve track conditions. To reduce the probability of early degradation of the new fasteners, a restriction of 18 mph is placed on the track. It should be noted, a majority of this section has a line speed of 18 mph due to a downslope. The MBTA needs to install additional fasteners to raise train speeds to 25 mph, and plans for that work are being developed.
- **North Station Portal to Community College:** Prior to the surge, the speed limit in this zone was 25 mph. Current speed restriction is 10 mph due to space constraints and safety considerations that will be addressed when excess rail currently being stored along the right of way is removed. This zone received new ties and rail during the surge. Additional rail was installed after the surge to address other areas of priority. Our Contractor is working to remove rail from the area, and once removed, the track will return to a speed of 25 mph when it is deemed safe. We anticipate return to line speed by the end of October.
- **Community College to Sullivan Flyover:** Current speed is 25 mph due to recently identified rail defects. Work is anticipated through the month of November before increasing the speed to reach 40 mph. The work to eliminate this speed restriction was always planned to last beyond the 30-day surge.
- **Assembly to Wellington (Dana Bridge):** Work was performed to replace a significant number of ties and rail during the surge. Additional ties and rail were needed to transition between new and existing construction. Work was completed during the surge to address this speed restriction, and during inspections conducted at the end of the 30-day surge, MBTA determined additional work was necessary to raise the 25 mph speed restriction. Anticipated work will continue through mid-November to address this condition.

The following northbound zones have returned to posted speeds:

- **Forest Hills Crossover:** This work is complete and the line speed over the crossover is 40 mph in the straight move.
- **Ruggles Crossover:** Work is complete, and speeds are 40 mph.

- **Back Bay Curves:** Work is complete, and speeds are 40 mph.
- **Downtown Crossing to State:** Work is complete, and trains are traveling at line speed of 25 mph.
- **Over Sullivan Flyover to Sullivan Station:** Work is complete, and speed has been increased to 40 mph.
- **Sullivan Station to Assembly:** Work is complete, and speed has been increased to 40 mph.
- **Wellington to Oak Grove:** Work is complete, and speed has been increased to 40 mph.

Orange Line Southbound:

- **Sullivan Station over Sullivan Flyover:** Work in this area requires additional ties and tamping and requires some rail replacement. Speeds will be increased incrementally from 10 mph to 25 mph, and finally to 40 mph as work is completed. Work in this area will continue through the month of November.
- **Sullivan Flyover to Community College:** Work in this area requires additional tie replacement, rail replacement, and tamping. Speeds will be increased incrementally from 10 mph to 25 mph, and finally to 40 mph as work is completed. Work in this area will continue through the month of November.
- **Community College to North Station Portal:** Work in this area requires additional tie replacement, and tamping. The work is in a narrow work zone in the tunnel approaching North Station. Speeds will be increased to 25 mph, once work is completed. Work in this area will continue through the month of November.
- **Tufts Curves:** The track was restricted to 10 mph for rail wear prior to the surge. During the surge, the worn rail was replaced. In addition, rail fasteners, or Cologne Eggs, were replaced to improve track conditions. To reduce the probability of early degradation of the new fasteners, a restriction of 18 mph was placed on the track. The MBTA needs to install additional fasteners to raise train speeds to 25 mph, and plans for that work are being developed.
- **Jackson Crossover:** Prior to the Orange Line closure, the speed was restricted to 10 mph. Ties embedded in concrete were replaced and as a result the speed was increased to 25 mph. Remaining work with ties embedded in concrete will extend through the next 60 days before the speed restriction can be lifted to the 40 mph line speed.

The following zones on the southbound have returned to posted speeds:

- **Oak Grove to Wellington:** Work is complete, and speed has been increased to 40 mph.
- **Wellington to Assembly (Dana Bridge):** Work is complete, and speed has been increased to 40 mph line speed.
- **Assembly to Sullivan Station:** Work is complete and running at 40 mph line speed.
- **Ruggles Crossover:** Work is complete, and speeds are 40 mph.
- **Forest Hills Crossover:** Work here is complete, and the line speed over the crossover is 40 mph in the straight move.

Additional work along the Orange Line is planned in the future, including near-term signal systems improvements and maintenance of way, as well as longer-term initiatives such as Southwest Corridor and Central Tunnel track reconstruction. Below are samples of this important work:

Orange Line Signal Upgrades
Oak Grove to Forest Hills. Project description: Our signal system is made up of equipment and cables that run along the track, collecting and sending data about train locations to our operations teams. Digital signals require less manual labor than the current analog system, reducing the time and money required for maintenance. In turn, this will result in: Improved service reliability, a renewed lifespan for the entire system, and more efficient communications about system diagnostics.

Power Transmission Installation
Location: Sullivan to Community College.
Project Description: A utility company will perform test pits, ground penetrating radar and soil borings to locate underground infrastructure and determine geotechnical soil characteristics and groundwater levels for the design and construction of underground 115 KV transmission lines.

Ruggles Station Improvements
Project description: The MBTA will make structural repairs and upgrades to various components including the headhouse and station platforms. This project will provide critical accessibility upgrades and improve rider experience throughout the station.

Southwest Corridor Right of Way Upgrades
Chinatown to Forest Hills.
Project description: Modernize the entire Southwest Corridor Right of Way from Chinatown to Forest Hills including, track, power, tunnel, bridge, and fire/life safety system upgrades.

Thank you again for the invitation to testify before the Committee and for your leadership and support of public transportation. I hope you find this information helpful, and I welcome the opportunity to engage you further in what the T is doing to build a better T and provide riders with the safe and reliable transit service they need and deserve.

Thank you,

Steve Poftak
General Manager
MBTA

Cc: Senator Elizabeth Warren